

scriptions of *C. pedunculata* (or the subspecies *pedunculata*) in some recent British and Continental Floras, except in the important character of fruit shape and size. Both in *Flora of the British Isles* (l.c. above) and in F. Hermann (*Flora von Nord-und-Mittel-europa*, 1956), for example, the fruits of the subspecies *hamulata* are said to be sessile and longer than wide (1.3 x 1.1 mm.), and those of the subspecies *pedunculata* to be sessile or stalked and wider than long (c. 0.8 x 1 mm.). The fruits of the Bengier specimen are sessile or stalked, but longer than wide (c. 1.1-1.2 x 1.0 mm.).

Until the position is properly worked out I think it is best to maintain the name used by Mason (1959) in her careful revision of the genus in New Zealand and Australia.

Miss R. Mason of the New Zealand D.S.I.R. has kindly confirmed the identification of the above collection, and a small portion of it has been forwarded to the State Herbarium, Perth, W.A., for retention.

—MAX GRAY, Division of Plant Industry, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra, A.C.T.

Occurrence of Fresh-water Jellyfish at South Perth.—In view of the report published in *The West Australian* of February 19, 1964, that large numbers of the fresh-water jellyfish, *Craspedacusta sowerbii* Lankester, 1880, had appeared in the newly formed Lake Burley Griffin at Canberra, and that the species had appeared in several inland fresh-water lakes and dams in recent years, it should be placed on record that this jellyfish was found to occur in a goldfish pond at South Perth in March 1959.

I discovered the jellyfish in the pond belonging to Mr. F. Monek, in Angelo Street, South Perth. There were large numbers of them and some were exhibited at the Water Life Show later in the month. A report appeared in the *Daily News*, Perth, of March 12, 1959, together with a photograph. It is not known how the organism arrived in the pond. The pond has not been emptied since but the medusae have not reappeared. Specimens were kept in an aquarium for 4 weeks. When those died, and disintegrated, the water was retained for more than 12 months but no hydroid stage developed.

The species was first observed in Australia on March 7, 1950, in Thornden Park reservoir near Adelaide (I. M. Thomas, *Nature*, 166, 1950; *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Aust.*, 74, 1961: 59). The next records were from the Balmain Reservoir near Sydney apparently early in 1954 (F. McNeill, *Aust. Mus. Mag.*, 11, 1954: 225) and in an aquarium at Oakleigh, Victoria (J. K. Ling and R. Duggan, *Viet. Nat.*, 79, 1962: 16). The medusae first appeared in this aquarium on January 26, 1962, and continued to appear until March 23.

Since the original discovery of this fresh-water medusa in the water-lily (*Victoria amazonica* = *regia*) tank in Regent's Park, London, it has been found in inland waters in many parts of the world, but the exact mechanism of its dispersal is still unknown.

N. E. Rice (*Amer. Midland Nat.*, 59, 1958: 525) in reviewing the question, mentions theories that the hydroid stage might be introduced into new areas along with water plants, fishes, or mussels to which it might be attached. He comments: "Some of the situations, however, in which medusae have been found, such as borrow pits and wells, would appear to preclude any of these means of dispersal. Conceivably water birds might carry the hydroids in mud on their feet. The hydroid is extremely resistant to adverse conditions and possesses remarkable powers of regeneration. The medusa, on the other hand, is somewhat delicate, and although downstream distribution in flowing water is easy to understand it is difficult to see how the medusa might be introduced into another drainage system on the other side of a divide." So far the hydroid stage has not been reported in Australia.

—BRUCE SHIPWAY, South Perth

The Preparation of Spinifex Gum by Australian Aborigines.—It is well known that the Australian Aborigines in the arid areas use in their artifacts a gum made from the highly resinous leaves of "Spinifex" (*Triodia* spp.) but the method of preparation of this material seems to have been rarely described.

In the early part of 1937 I was stationed as a missionary at the Warburton Range Mission, soon after its establishment, when the Aboriginal population was still completely tribalised. I had many opportunities of observing the process of spinifex gum manufacture.

The men burn the *Triodia* clumps with fire sticks. Fire will not normally spread from one clump to the other and each has to be set alight separately. The next stages are wholly in the hands of the women. They come with their wooden bowls or yandies (or *Wira* among the Bidjandjara-speaking people) and winnow out the particles of gum from the ashes.

The original globules of gum, following the burning of the clump, are of quite minute size and may not exceed that of a pin's head. However, many hours of meticulous work will winnow out an accumulation of gum particles from the foreign matter and these are fused into solid lumps, about the size of a man's fist. This is done by the application of "top heat" from fire-sticks that do not actually touch the gum. "Top heat" must be used as the natives have no fire-resistant vessel in which the material can be melted. Like the winnowing, this is all done in the *wira*.

Before use the lump is softened by heat, and the material used in the hot state, after which it sets hard, like sealing wax, when allowed to go cold.

—A. G. MATHEWS, South Perth

[Commenting on the above note Sir John Cleland, Adelaide, states: "I have not heard of this way of obtaining 'Spinifex' gum before. The way I have seen is beating the *Triodia* basal stems on a rock surface and so dislodging the 'gum.' The native women could easily separate the 'gum' particles by yandying in a pitchi."—Ed.]